

Amendments to the Claims

Claims 1, 7, 12, 18, 22-24, and 30 are being amended. The Claim Listing below will replace all prior versions of the claims in the application:

Claim Listing

1. (Currently Amended) In a computer, an apparatus for providing software training and technical support to an end user, the apparatus comprising:
 - a graphical user interface having selectable graphical user areas adapted to support multiple different tasks, each task activated through a respective sequence of steps executed by a user through interaction with the selectable graphical user areas; and
 - a graphical overlay positioned over said graphical user interface, the graphical overlay including (i) a first step indication associated with a first step in a given task directing the user's attention to a first selectable graphical user area and (ii) a next step indication associated with a next step in the given task automatically displayed upon the user's completion of the first step; and
descriptors, corresponding to the steps and distinct from the graphical user areas, that are highlighted in a manner indicating which step is being performed.
2. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 1 further including a list of task indications selectable by the user, wherein the list of task indications dynamically changes as a function of the selectable graphical user areas being displayed in said graphical user interface.
3. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 1 further including a list of task indications selectable by the user, wherein the list of task indications is capable of being positioned apart from said graphical user interface.
4. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 1 further including a list of task indications selectable by the user, wherein the tasks represented in said list of task indications is a function of a mode setting, wherein a mode setting contains at least one setting including a beginner, an intermediate, and an advanced mode setting.

5. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 1 further including a list of task indications selectable by the user, wherein the tasks represented in said list of task indications are user-privilege specific.
6. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 5 wherein the user- privilege is consistent with the user-privilege in a data communication network.
7. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to Claim 1 further including a list of task indications selectable by the user, wherein the list of task indications are replaced by descriptors associated with a selected task indication in response to user selection ~~a list of task step indications, and wherein each task step indication is coupled to a respective step indication displayed in the graphical overlay, wherein each associated task step indication is highlighted in sequence with displaying its respective step indication.~~
8. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein said graphical overlay is invisible other than the indications being displayed.
9. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein the indications displayed include an information box including at least one of the following: recommended input, required input, example input, subsequence list, and a description of what to expect next.
10. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 1 further comprising recorded voice files or a text-to-speech synthesizer coupled to the step indications, wherein the step indications include at least one instruction simultaneously presented audibly.
11. (Previously presented) The apparatus according to Claim 1 further including a list of task indications selectable by the user, wherein selection of one or more selectable graphical areas in a sequence before selecting a task indication causes the apparatus to automatically highlight task indications corresponding to possible tasks being performed.

12. (Currently Amended) In a computer, a method for providing software technical support and training to an end user, the method comprising:

providing a graphical user interface having selectable graphical user areas adapted to support multiple different tasks, each task activated through a respective sequence of steps executed by a user through interaction with the selectable graphical user areas;

forming a graphical overlay positioned over said graphical user interface;

displaying a first step indication associated with a first step in a given task to direct the user's attention to a first selectable graphical user area; and

upon the user's completion of the first step, automatically displaying a next step indication associated with a next step in the given task to direct the user's attention to a next selectable graphical user area; and

highlighting descriptors, corresponding to the steps and distinct from the graphical user areas, in a manner indicating which step is being performed.

13. (Previously presented) The method according to Claim 12 further including displaying task indications, wherein displaying task indications includes dynamically changing the task indications as a function of the selectable graphical areas being displayed in said graphical user interface.

14. (Previously presented) The method according to Claim 12 further including displaying task indications, wherein displaying task indications includes presenting the task indications external from said graphical user interface.

15. (Previously presented) The method according to Claim 12 further including displaying task indications, wherein displaying task indications includes modifying the task indications as a function of a mode setting, wherein a mode setting contains at least one setting from a beginner, an intermediate, and an advanced mode setting.

16. (Previously presented) The method according to Claim 12 further including displaying task indications, wherein displaying the task indications includes modifying the task indications as a function of a user-privilege.

17. (Previously presented) The method according to Claim 16 wherein the user-privilege is consistent with the user-privilege in a data communication network.
18. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 12 further including displaying task indications, wherein displaying task indications includes:

replacing the task indications with a plurality of descriptors associated with a selected task indication in response to user selection task step indications, wherein each task step indication is coupled to a respective step indication displayed in the graphical overlay, and

highlighting each task step indication in sequence with a displaying its respective step indication.
19. (Previously presented) The method according to Claim 12 wherein forming the graphical overlay includes configuring the graphical overlay to allow the selectable graphical user areas in the graphical user interface to be displayed without obstruction other than the step indication being displayed.
20. (Previously presented) The method according to Claim 12 wherein displaying the step indications includes displaying an information box, including at least one of the following: recommended input, required input, example input, subsequence list, and a description of what to expect next.
21. (Previously presented) The method according to Claim 12 further comprising converting the step indications to an audio output by means of recorded voice files or a text-to-speech synthesizer coupled to the step indications, wherein the step indication being displayed is simultaneously presented audibly.
22. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim 12 further including displaying task indications selectable by the user, wherein a user's selecting one or more selectable graphical areas in a sequence before selecting a task indication causes the method to further include automatically highlighting task indications corresponding to possible tasks being performed.

23. (Currently Amended) In a computer, an apparatus for providing software technical support and training to an end user, the apparatus comprising:

means for providing a graphical user interface having selectable graphical user areas adapted to support multiple different tasks, each task activated through a respective sequence of steps executed by a user through interaction with the selectable graphical user areas;

means for forming a graphical overlay positioned over said graphical user interface;

means for displaying a first step indication in the graphical overlay, the first step indication associated with a first step in a given task directing the user's attention to a first selectable graphical user area; and

upon the user's completion of the first step, means for automatically displaying a next step indication associated with a next step in the given task in the graphical overlay to direct the user's attention to a next selectable graphical user area; and

means for highlighting descriptors, corresponding to the steps and distinct from the graphical user areas, in a manner indicating which step is being performed.

24. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium having stored thereon sequences of instructions, the sequences of instructions, when executed by a digital processor, causing the processor to:

provide a graphical user interface having a plurality of selectable graphical user areas adapted to support multiple different tasks, each task activated through a respective sequence of steps executed by a user through interaction with the selectable graphical user areas; and

form a graphical overlay positioned over said graphical user interface;

display a first step indication in the graphical overlay, the first step indication associated with a first step in a given task directing the user's attention to a first selectable graphical user area; and

upon the user's completion of the first step, automatically display a next step indication associated with a next step in the given task in the graphical overlay to direct the user's attention to a next selectable graphical user area; and

descriptors, corresponding to the steps and distinct from the graphical user areas, that are highlighted in a manner indicating which step is being performed.

25. (Previously presented) The computer-readable medium according to Claim 24 wherein the sequence of instructions further causes the processor to display a list of task indications and to dynamically change the list of task indications as a function of the selectable graphical user areas being displayed in said graphical user interface.
26. (Previously presented) The computer-readable medium according to Claim 24 wherein the sequence of instructions further causes the processor display a list of task indications and to present the list of task indications external from said graphical user interface.
27. (Previously presented) The computer-readable medium according to Claim 24 wherein the sequence of instructions further causes the processor to display a list of task and to modify the list of task indications as a function of a mode setting, wherein the mode setting includes at least one of the following settings: beginner, intermediate, or advanced mode setting.
28. (Previously presented) The computer-readable medium according to Claim 24 wherein the sequence of instructions further causes the processor to display a list of task indications and to modify the list of task indications as a function of a user-privilege.
29. (Previously presented) The computer-readable medium according to Claim 28 wherein the user-privilege is consistent with the user-privilege in a data communications network.
30. (Currently Amended) The computer-readable medium according to Claim 24 wherein the sequence of instructions further causes the processor to:
 - display a list of task indications selectable by the user; and
 - replace the list with a plurality of descriptors associated with a selected task indication in response to user selection task step indications, wherein each task step indication is coupled to a respective step indication displayed in the graphical overlay; and

~~highlight each task step indication in sequence with displaying its respective step indication in the graphical overlay.~~

31. (Previously presented) The computer-readable medium according to Claim 24 wherein the sequence of instructions forming the graphical overlay configures the graphical overlay to be invisible other than the step indications being displayed.
32. (Previously presented) The computer-readable medium according to Claim 24 wherein the step indications being displayed include an information box, including at least one of the following: recommended input, required input, example input, subsequence list, and a description of what to expect next.
33. (Previously presented) The computer-readable medium according to Claim 24 further including a sequence of instructions to convert the step indications displayed to the end user to an audio output and to present the step indications audibly.
34. (Previously presented) The computer-readable medium according to Claim 24 wherein the sequence of instructions further causes the processor to display a list of task indications selectable by the user and to monitor a sequence of interactions by the end user with one or more selectable graphical user areas before automatically highlighting task indications corresponding to possible tasks being performed.